

Downers Grove Township Facilities Plan - Introduction

Introduction

This document information aids in understanding the plan to address current and future needs of the Township to serve residents.

History

As documented in the Capital Projects Fund, the Township initially purchased five adjacent properties, removing a small apartment building and three single family homes, in anticipation of expanding the Township offices and north parking lot. In 2012, a resident survey identified the need for more space for senior citizen programming and support. The south parking lot was added via an Inter-Governmental Agreement with the Village of Downers Grove in 1987. One property was sold in 2015 to facilitate the Village redevelopment at Saratoga and Ogden Avenues.

Defining Need

In 2017 the groundwork for a Capital Projects Fund was begun. Needs, funding, and process were identified, and the Capital Projects Fund was approved beginning the 18/19 fiscal year ending February 28, 2019. In 2018 DG Township worked with the Village of Downers Grove to align Township properties with the Village Zoning Ordinance. Supervisor Mark Thoman petitioned for all parcels to be consolidated and rezoned to a single INP-1 -- small institutional -- parcel. In late 2018, DG Township retained an engineering firm and architect to study the existing building and site, to see how space could be best utilized to meet Township services and programs, and how we might best utilize the open land on the west side.

Developing a Plan

At the direction of the Township, Engineering Solutions Team and MTZ Architects prepared a study offering solutions to needs as outlined in the Capital Project Fund, adding cost estimates to the needs and grouping the projects into solution categories of good, better, and best. This plan incorporated two elements: a space efficiency study and a site master plan.

Evaluating Options

Creating public access to the basement of the building was originally considered a priority, to take advantage of available space, and provide public access to the food pantry. The SES/SMP study showed this as a "better" solution, but that retrofitting public access to the basement, and the accompanying unforeseen renovations required by public access, will be expensive and provide a less than ideal solution. Discussions were held with the Village Community Development Department, the FISH Food Pantry, and the study team of engineers and architects. As a result, creating new first floor meeting space, for the public use by groups and by the food pantry, appears to be the most cost-effective way to address needs.

Challenges and Opportunities

The Township is an efficient, low cost unit of government. The challenge is to adapt for the future, and continue to provide cost-efficient, needed service to Township senior citizens, the needy, and youth.

Township Challenges:

- Parking is inadequate. Monday and Friday at the Township are worst. If you go to "Street Level" Google Maps you can see for yourself. We need more parking, but we don't have funds to build underground compensatory storage.

- Meeting space is lacking. The basement is not publically accessible for meeting space, and remodeling to ADA compliance incurs exceptional cost for limited improvement.
- The FISH Food Pantry is not able to be fully open to the public. It's in the basement, which does not have public, ADA compliant access.
- Parts of our property are in Local Poor Drainage Areas – LPDA's. We'll need to do further studies to determine the current state of Base Flood Elevations, and exactly where is the water table elevation.

Township Opportunities:

- CHSD99 North Campus is looking for outdoor lab space for STEM Environmental Science classes. It's our intention to support the high school and provide them with space for this hands-on lab work. This would involve, in part, returning a notable portion of turf lawn to native prairie, providing students a nearby convenient real-world laboratory, and providing the Township with a Best Management Practices area for storm water absorption.
- Garden Works is a 501(c)(3) that provides, at no charge, 4' by 8' raised bed vegetable gardens to those in need. We have begun referring Assistance recipients to this charity, as has the FISH Food Pantry. The Township proposes installing several units on our west side so that seniors have a convenient place to garden, and so we can grow vegetables for the food pantry, providing food for the hungry.
- There are new concepts in parking lot design that allow for BMP treatment of excess storm water. The Township can provide a working example to other commercial and government entities how parking lots can be cost-effective storm water control devices.
- The state of Illinois has committed to renewable energy sources. The Township has researched green energy and finds a clear and compelling opportunity to use a one-time investment in Photovoltaic Solar – PV Solar – to provide recurring monthly savings, for electric bills, to taxpayers.
- Our membership in The Interlocal Purchasing System – TIPS-USA – may allow realizing savings similar to the Township using TIP-USA for new LED lighting, and roof repairs and upgrades.

Timeline

2012 - Needs identified

2017 - Capital Projects Fund developed

2018 - CPF created, properties consolidated and rezoned

Spring 2019 - Space Efficiency Study and Site Master Plan completed

Next Steps

Planning

Engineering Studies

Continued work with Village and CHSD99

Safety and security upgrades to existing building

Summary

The Facilities Plan is part of the process guiding the Township to address current and future needs. This process has not been straight-line linear. While needs are easy to determine, the best way to address them has evolved. The SES/SMP has proved an invaluable guide, defining costs and pointing the Township to the most productive and cost-efficient path. Please feel free to contact the Supervisor's Office with any questions, comments, or inquiries regarding the information presented.

Prepared by Mark S. Thoman, Supervisor

March, 2019